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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period December 2023

Released 14/03/2024

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Key statistics

In the December quarter 2023:

- 67 disputes occurred.
- 18,600 employees were involved and 44,200 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 7 industries and in 8 states and territories.

During the year ended December 2023, there were 198 disputes and a total of 99,300 working days lost.

Key statistics

	Quarter		Year ended	
	September Quarter 2023	December Quarter 2023	December Quarter 2022	December Quarter 2023
Number of disputes (no.)				
New	53	47	180	190
Total	67	67	188	198
Employees involved ('000)				
New	17.4	14.3	121.0	45.3
Total	18.8	18.6	122.4	46.0
Working days lost ('000)	37.1	44.2	196.8	99.3

Overview

In the December quarter 2023, there were:

- 67 disputes, the same as the previous quarter.
- 18,600 employees involved, a decrease from 18,800 in the previous quarter.
- 44,200 working days lost, an increase from 37,100 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 198 disputes occurred, 10 more than in the previous year.
- 99,300 working days were lost, 97,500 less than in the previous year.

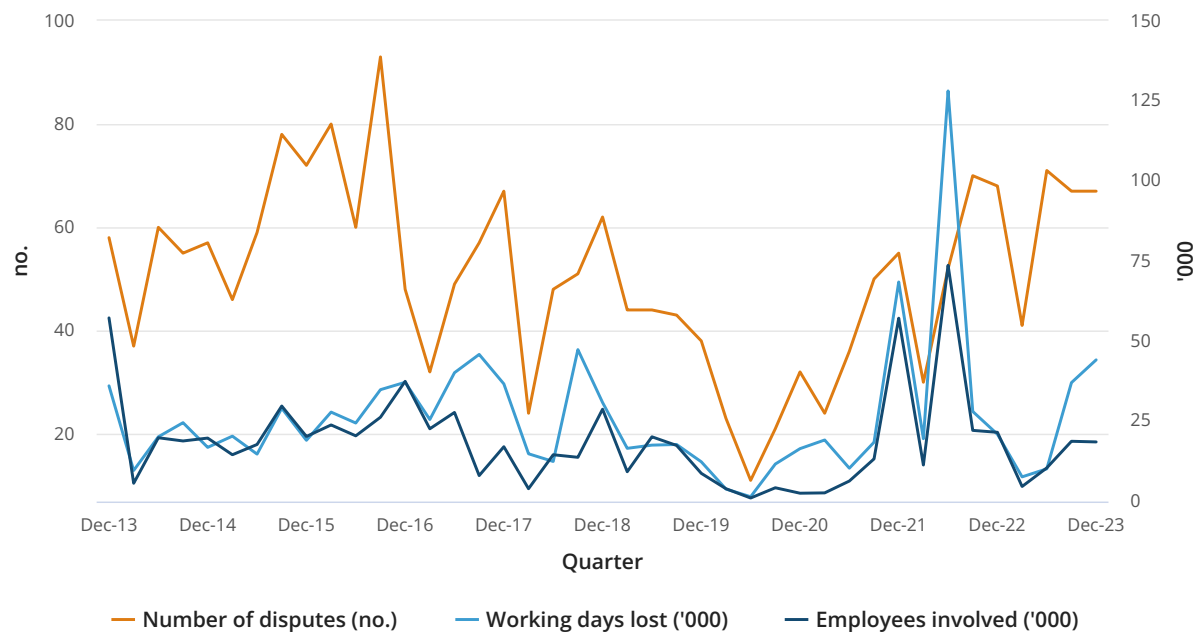
Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		Working days lost
	New (no.)	Total (no.)	New ('000)	Total ('000)	('000)
December Quarter 2021	37	55	50.6	57.2	68.5
March Quarter 2022	22	30	10.1	11.4	19.6
June Quarter 2022	45	52	71.2	73.7	128.1
September Quarter 2022	60	70	21.2	22.2	28.1
December Quarter 2022	53	68	18.4	21.6	21.0
March Quarter 2023	33	41	4.1	4.7	7.7
June Quarter 2023	57	71	9.6	10.5	10.2
September Quarter 2023	53	67	17.4	18.8	37.1
December Quarter 2023	47	67	14.3	18.6	44.2

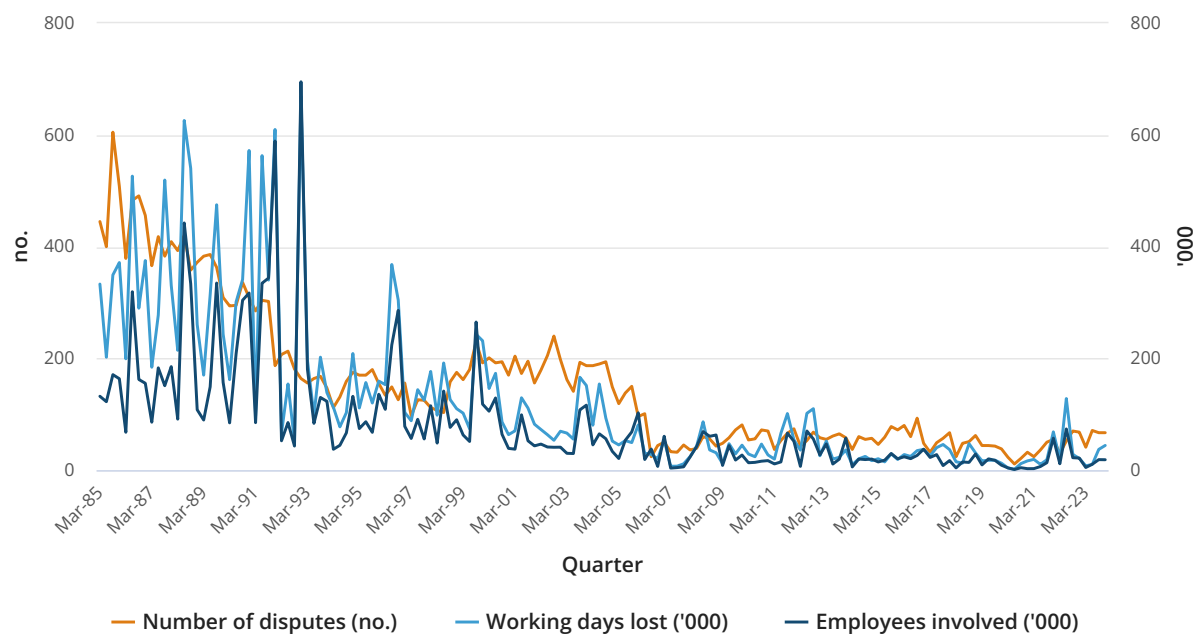
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the December quarter, disputes occurred in seven industries. Over a quarter (30%) of the total working days lost were in the Transport, postal and warehousing industry.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

		September Quarter 2023		December Quarter 2023	
		Working days lost ('000)	Working days lost per thousand employees (no.)	Working days lost ('000)	Working days lost per thousand employees (no.)
Mining					
	Coal mining	np	np	-	-
	Other mining	1.5	6.0	np	np
Manufacturing					
	Metal product etc (a)	3.3	10.4	np	np
	Other manufacturing	2.4	4.3	12.8	23.2
Construction		3.9	3.6	2.5	2.3
Transport, postal & warehousing		9.8	15.6	13.3	19.9
Education & training; Health care & social assistance		9.1	2.9	9.2	
Other industries (a)		np	np	3.8	
All industries		37.1	2.9	44.2	

(a) see Glossary - [Industry \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2023#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2023#glossary) - for details of industries included

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)



Feedback

States and territories

Disputes occurred in eight states and territories in the December quarter, with over a third (42%) of the total working days lost occurring in Victoria.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

September Quarter 2023			December Quarter 2023	
	Working days lost ('000)	Working days lost per thousand employees (no.)	Working days lost ('000)	Working days lost per thousand employees (no.)
New South Wales	11.3	2.8	5.0	1.2
Victoria	8.1	2.4	18.5	5.4
Queensland	8.1	3.2	11.0	4.2
South Australia	6.4	7.4	5.2	6.0
Western Australia	1.9	1.4	3.9	2.7
Tasmania	0.6	2.4	0.3	1.1
Northern Territory	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.5
Australian Capital Territory	0.6	2.3	0.3	1.2
Australia	37.1	2.9	44.2	3.4

Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 79% of disputes (37 of 47) which ended in the September quarter 2023.

Cause of dispute for disputes which ended during the quarter

		June Quarter 2023			September Quarter 2023		
		Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
EB(a) related							
	Remuneration	10	0.5	0.6	14	1.5	5.1
	Employment conditions	37	2.9	6.1	23	9.7	17.5
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non- EB(a) related							
	Remuneration	1	2.1	1.5	1	np	np
	Employment conditions	-	-	-	2	np	np
	Health and safety	6	2.4	1.9	4	1.1	1.8
	Job security	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Managerial policy	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Union issues	-	-	-	1	0.3	0.2
	Other	3	1.1	0.7	2	1.7	
Total		57	9.0	10.7	47	14.3	

(a) Enterprise Bargaining (EB)

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Feedback

Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 47 disputes which ended in the September quarter, 20 lasted up to and including 1 day. These disputes had:

- 10,100 employees involved; and
- 7,700 working days lost.

Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

June Quarter 2023			September Quarter 2023			
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Up to and including 1 day	31	7.3	4.8	20	10.1	7.7
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	12	0.8	1.3	6	1.8	2.8
Over 2 and less than 5 days	6	0.6	2.1	14	1.5	5.1
5 and less than 10 days	7	np	np	2	0.1	0.6
10 days and over	1	np	np	5	0.8	10.0
Total	57	9.0	10.7	47	14.3	26.3

(np) not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 77% of disputes (36 of 47) which ended in the September quarter 2023.

Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

June Quarter 2023			September Quarter 2023			
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	4	0.7	1.0	8	1.6	4.8
State legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pre-determined return to work	50	7.2	9.0	36	12.6	21.4
Resumption without negotiation	3	1.1	0.7	3	0.1	0.1
Mediation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	57	9.0	10.7	47	14.3	26.3

(-) nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Feedback

Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

Download all (483.55 KB)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

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[58.44 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

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[54.01 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

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[53.83 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[62.93 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

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[61.73 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

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[92.13 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

↓ [Download XLSX](#)

[63.43 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

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[79.2 KB]

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Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, December 2023](#)